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177 178 Anyone who tries to become acquainted with the present-day General Indians in their own villages will not fail to notice at once that certain domains of their culture appear completely open to foreign influences, whereas in others the attachment to the traditional persons is extraordinarily strong. The conjunction of the factors responsible for this form of reaction to interethnic contacts is very complex and can be understood only with reference to the central theoretical problem of acculturation, concerning the reinterpretation of the new elements in terms of the tribal "ethos," or, in other words, the reconciliation of the conflict, on the basis of previous experience between the traditional relations and values, on the one hand, and the innovations that become necessary or desirable, on the other.

621 In their numerical composition, as we have seen, the present-day General villages vary between some 40 and a few hundred individuals. Because of the extraordinary spatial mobility, the size of the social is subject to constant modification. The smaller groups are those that are found close to the coast in contact with urban and rural populations, while the larger villages are located farther in the interior, at different places in the extensive basin of the Peixoto. The large villages, with two hundred [361] [61] [554] or more souls, are normally subdivided, however, into various local groups, each of which is made up of a kin group that has as nucleus the great family of a personality of prestige, generally a religious chief (Kanhoro) among the Kanhoro and Ishkir and among the Kayová. The whole village or horde actually appears as a unit only in certain circumstances, such as important religious celebrations.

621 182 [177] Concerning the degree of social cohesion of the different communities, its diminution is, so to speak, in direct proportion to the time during which the group lives in constant relation with foreign populations. Among the most striking causes are, in the [56] first place, the large number of interethnic marriages, and, in the [78] second place, unfavorable conditions for performing religious ceremonies, which constitute perhaps, as we shall see, one of the forces that most cement the group solidarity of the General.

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621 177 The most suitable example of such a situation is the village of Bonacal, on the coast of the State of São Paulo. The Indians of this village have been living for several generations in close association with the rural inhabitants of Lusitano-Brazilian origin. The long familiarity has led to close neighborly relations, which are seen, for instance, in an exchange of economic services (particularly in the mutirões /co-operative work parties/ see pp. 66 ff./) and in the frequency with which the caboclos participate in the celebrations held in the Indian village. The economy approximates that of the caboclos, particularly in the almost exclusive importance of the cultivation of the soil to the detriment of hunting. By the acceptance of foreign individuals into the community as husbands of the Indian girls, the primitive ethnic homogeneity was broken, which makes difficult the performance of religious ceremonies, in which, tradition requires, all the members of the group, without exception, are to participate. The foreigners are not only unfamiliar with the constituent elements and the significance of these ceremonies, but also find them ridiculous; consequently the performance of them became more and more infrequent, to the point of being practically extinct. The main factor of communitarian cohesion, the communion of religious ideals, has thus lost its force, which is reflected in the constant dissensions and enmities within the group.

621 177 There is a very different situation, for instance, in the village of Rio Branco, also located on the Paulista coast, but made up exclusively of white Indians. In its vicinity there is almost no caboclo population with whom constant relations could have been established. On the other hand, part of the population is almost always out of the village, in neighboring towns or cities, on a kind of vending tournée /Fr., "circuit"/, selling artifacts and begging alms. The form of interethnic contacts to which they are subject thus differs essentially from that the Bonacal Indians have experienced for generations. In this community there are no elements that are to be considered foreign bodies.

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563 (621) This does not hold for the Mbyá, who do not admit into their community any element foreign to the tribe. In most instances they do not even succeed in living in harmony with some Ñandéva family that for some reason has come to settle in their midst. I had information about an exceptional case: an Indian [582] from the Mbyá village of Rio Branco was said to have married a woman from the coast. I did not know the couple, who lived on some fazenda.

563 • 98 The Mbyá say that they cannot allow marriages with individuals "from outside" because the latter "do not know how to pray," that is, they cannot participate satisfactorily in the religious ceremonies. "It is only true Guaraní who pray," an Indian woman of this group explained to me. /31/ The Ñandéva and Kayová, too, think that the "civilized ones" and the mestiços cannot be religious persons. The religious inspiration indispensable for the mystic communication with the divinities and the protective spirits is a privilege of the pure Indian. At various times in the coastal villages I have met a caboclo from Paraná, Leocádio Chagas de Oliveira, who says he is a Guaraní mestiço born in Catas Altas, in Alto-Ribeira, near the Paraná-São Paulo border. Even though he enjoys enough prestige [629] among the Indians and participates in the prayers and dances, even having taken the title of "yvyrúdjá," they say that no yvyrúdjá (protective spirit) could descend upon him, because Leocádio is not a member of the tribe.

563 (977) These facts show, on the one hand, that the tribal religion is the strongest barrier against crossing with foreign people, and, on the other hand, that mixed unions cannot fail to affect the tribal life profoundly, resulting directly into the nuclear sphere of the culture, whose most palpable aspect is the performance of [629] the religious ceremonies. The Guaraní, principally the oldest ones, are fully aware of this process, and in their conversations they insist on the relationship that exists between the increasing number of interethnic unions and the phenomena of social disorganization and cultural disintegration. /Page 32 is blank./

2: Schaden--159 E-4,5 (1948-1954) 1962 S344 Guarani S344

/134 cont./

782 The Ñanderú is distinguished from the others principally
778 by the quantity of prayers of which he is the bearer or owner (14).
424
422
436
[971]

14. /From p. 151 of the original source./ There is an interesting analogy between the Guaraní Ñanderú and the pajé of the Tenetehára. While the former is the more powerful the greater the number of prayers that he has at his disposal in order to put himself in contact with the supernatural world, the latter grows in importance and power with the number of evil spirits, carriers of sicknesses, which he is able to "call," in order to be possessed by them and then drive them away. Wagley and Galvão, 1949, pp. 109-110.

Each of them can have, as we have seen, greater or lesser "force," susceptible of being intensified or not, according to the attitudes of one's fellows and the behavior and precautions of the one who prays himself. In order for his cures to be effective -- "in order
762 not to forget everything," in the words of the Indian Zizi of
115 Bananal --, the Ñanderú should nourish himself exclusively with
956 "light" food and, above all, avoid the meat of game.

78 I have participated at various times in the prayers and dances
756 directed by Ñanderú Miguel, who brought a group of Mbyá in a
622 long pilgrimage from Paraguay to Ilariri, on the Atlantic Ocean.
123 During the porái (name of the prayer in the Mbyá dialect), the religious chief seemed entirely transfigured and claimed to have a
[976] direct understanding with Ñanderú Tenondé, the supreme deity, who informed him of everything that would come to pass on earth. One night he interrupted the prayer and the tiring dance at a certain point in order to tell me that he just received information that on the following day the rains that had continued for some time would end.

2: Schaden--182 E-4,5 (1948-1954) 1962 SM4 Guaraní SM4

/125 cont./

782 to dictate some more of his prayers himself. He did it, so he
126 explained, in the certainty that they would "return" to him
828 afterwards. The attitude of Pai Tomás with regard to the record-
ing machine on which I had recorded some songs sung /126/ by
him was similar: "Now the machine is going to take my
782 prayers." This reminds one of the Ñandéva expression that the
[776] protector spirit brings (not: teaches) the prayer to the individual.
[787] It is easy to see that the poxahñ is taken both as force and as
[424] substance, which can be bound to a person and, in a way, de-
tach itself from him. Thus also the fact that it is likewise suit-
782 able for magical actions. Among the prayers of the Kayová
789 there is one that is used to kill harmful animals. It clears away
foxes, ocelots, opossums, and other enemies of the poultry
house: it is so strong, they told me, that it succeeds in killing
the dogs in the house. This example also shows that the idea of
poxahñ or "prayer" is not always necessarily limited to the
domain of religious experiences: its use may be transformed
simply into a technique of magic. Like other cultures, that of
the Guaraní tends finally to confuse the two spheres -- religion
and magic -- although they are based, as we know, on two
fundamentally opposite attitudes of the human spirit.

782 One final observation with reference to the function of the
829 prayers. Comparing, from the point of view of social disorganiza-
tion, the explanations given in one village and another concern-
ing the evils that afflict the world and the dangers that hover over
it, there is a significant difference in that the groups of greater
cohesion and relative social economy attribute the fault to for-
eigners, while those of greater dysnomy seek it in their own
midst. The former turn to ethnocentric arguments, such as, for
example, the Ñandéva of Jacareí, who told me that the world is
going badly nowadays because the white people are not very re-
ligious: that to pray, to praise God, the Guaraní does not have
a set day, Sunday, but praises him (ñemboeté) every day; that
to him all the dances are religious, unlike the white man, who has
78 "dances that are even sinful." The assimilation of foreign con-
182 cepts into tribal culture is thus put in the service of the traditional
177 doctrines themselves.

2: Schaden--183 E-4,5 (1946-1954) 1982 SM4 Guarani SM4

/126 cont./

78 182 doctrines themselves. As internal dissensions increase, these same concepts, as is clarified in another part of this work, serve to make the group itself responsible for the impossibility of achieving cultural ideals which, nonetheless, everybody continues to aspire to. Concrete expressions of this impossibility are, in the first place, the reduction and final disappearance of the feasts with collective prayers and dances, and, secondly, the progressive abandonment of the individual prayer as a manifestation of religiousness. Without any exaggeration it can be [181] said that the Guaraní ceases to be Guaraní when he ceases to feel the necessity to apply himself to his religious devotions, that is, to the porahêi.

/127/ When the social disorganization of the villages reaches the point of making the feasts with collective prayers and dances no longer performable, the family heads still continue to perform the domestic cult, the last one to die out. At Bananal [184] I found few houses in which anyone still prayed; at Dourados I never heard a Ñandéva sing his porahêi. This is a state which none of the Kayová or Mbüá villages visited by me had reached.

4. Ideas about sicknesses and death

753 [703] It might be said in the last analysis that the dangers, the great misfortunes that preoccupy and torment the spirit of the Guaraní, are reduced to two: the many sicknesses that afflict him and, even more, the mythical idea of the end of the world ever closer and closer.

Let us linger a little over the notion of the illnesses which in fact prevail frighteningly among the poor Guaraní and which -- it is not difficult to verify -- will see to it that the day on which the end of the world will be reached for this tribe actually is not far off.

/182 cont./

77 18 177 spirits, which the Kayová doctrine mentions. Furthermore, the margin of individual variability in the interpretation of the world, far from imposing a rigorously closed doctrinary body on the /183/ Guaraní believer, trains him for ample tolerance with regard to incongruences or even contradictions. It is probable that in ancient times, when Nandéva, Mbüá, and Kayová families did not yet live together in one and the same village, the beliefs and ceremonies of each one of the subtribes constituted a more rigid and well defined whole.

[183] Among the contemporaneous Guaraní, religious acculturation proceeds parallel to the adoption of new moral ideas, among them that of individual guilt. The Guaraní religion, one must insist on this, does not, except vaguely, recognize free will as a basis for the evaluation of human actions with regard to the fate of the soul post mortem. Good and evil are not qualities inherent in the actions of the individual, but necessary consequences of the nature of the one who performs them. Although susceptible of supernatural [184] sanction (perhaps by way of reward or revenge), the author is not considered morally responsible for his actions.

• [178] It is in consequence of miscegenation and detribalization that the ceremonies and feasts prescribed by the tribal religion are little by little abandoned. For the realization of the great feasts the presence of all the members of the group is required: in most cases it is not possible to assemble everybody, because there is always someone to be found abroad, working on a fazenda or yerbal. And furthermore, if it is certain that the Guaraní religion constitutes the "nucleus of resistance" of the tribal culture, it is no less certain that the religion is the first thing rejected by the mestizos. Because of the cultural disnivellation stemming from that, there is no ground for a communitary spirit that would join together the pure and mestizo Guaraní. Were it not for their common position before the white man, the fact that they share with the Guaraní up to a certain point the situation of relative disdain in which caboclos and coastal people always put them, the mestizos, not infrequently characterized as being maliciously clever and troublemakers, would soon disown their native ancestry.